DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 175 524 PS 010 589

AUTHOR LeCompte, Margaret D.; Stewart, Ida Santos
TITLE Learning the Ropes: Children's Acquisition of the Student Role.
PUB DATE Apr 79
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, California, April 8-12, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Content Analysis; Early Experience; *Kindergarten Children; Learning Readiness; Nonparametric Statistics; Peer Influence; Primary Education; Question Answer Interviews; *Role Perception; Self Control; Sex Differences; *Socialization; Socioeconomic Status; *Student Attitudes; *Student Role; *Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

This study examines the manner in which a group of kindergarten children viewed their kindergarten experience, how those views changed over time, and the extent to which those views were affected by background variables and preschool experiences. Eighty-three randomly selected urban kindergarten children were interviewed three times over a 7-month period. Photographs and drawings were used to elicit children's preferences in relatively unstructured interview sessions. Interviews were recorded and content analysis was conducted to extract from the children's words a sense of the ways children viewed the schooling experience. Categories of response were developed and analyzed with non-parametric statistical techniques. Variables such as family income and parents' education were treated as independent variables and replies to interview questions were treated as dependent variables. Among the results, children appeared more able to tell what teachers are to do in school than what they themselves are to do. Change in children's perceptions of student role was toward more disciplined behavior and greater orientation to cognitive activity. Children's views of school, student and teacher roles, impulse control, sex differences, amount of time spent in day care, preschool experience and student role, and impact of peer group are among the topics discussed in conjunction with the findings. (Author/RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED175524

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

LEARNING THE ROPES:
CHILDREN'S ACQUISITION OF THE STUDENT ROLE

Margaret D. LeCompte Ph.D.

Ida Santos Stewart Ph.D.

University of Houston

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Margaret D. LeCompte
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

PS010589

Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Meeting, April 10, 1979, San Francisco, California

INTRODUCTION

The overall objective of this study is to identify the content of kindergarten children's beliefs about the schooling experience, and the order in which children acquire notions of disciplined behavior, conformity to authority, impulse control, and task orientation. 83 4 and 5 year old children were interviewed at the beginning, the middle, and the end of kindergarten to determine what they thought school was about, of what teacher and student roles consisted, and the types of constraints they perceived and preferences they held for learning experiences.

Background

Schooling has traditionally been viewed as one of the primary agencies for socialization of children; however, schools as socializing agencies have been neglected by researchers. While there is much disagreement both over what children actually do learn, and what they should learn in school, it is clear that the schooling experience, both explicitly ard implicitly, is expected to transmit to children some of the attitudes, values, skills, and behavior patterns which are functional for adult life (Dreeben, 1968; Jackson, 1968). It is also expected to reinforce, not to interfere with, those adult patterns which it does not explicitly teach. Empirical research detailing how schools actually accomplish this progress is sparse; research describing when particular notions about schooling are initiated is almost nonexistent.

An exception is a study which indicates that although they may

use a variety of strategies for teaching norms, teachers of young children expend a great deal of time and energy guiding their students in the acquisition of values, attitudes, and behavior patterns appropriate for a task oriented, authoritative, and often crowded environment (LeCompte, 1978). Roughly speaking, school experiences attempt to prepare children for the type of world they will face upon exiting from school. These rules reflect a normative structure in classrooms and teacher styles (LeCompte, 1978). It appears that at least by the end of their fourth year of schooling, children can articulate the rules and behavior which teachers expect of them, rules which they and their teachers deem no less important than academic achievement for school success. What is not known, however, is when children acquire these norms.

Preschool Experience

Schooling has traditionally begun with kindergarten, the place where children were prepared for classroom life. It has been the task of the kindergarten teacher to teach the children such school norms as attending to teacher imposed tasks, conforming to authority, developing impulse control, and exhibiting behavior appropriate to the activities demanded.

Recent changes in family and economic structures, however, have had a profound effect upon this arrangement. For the first time in history, the average school child in American has a mother who works outside the home (Bureau of the Census, 1970). More and more children spend at least one and possibly several years in pre-

kindergarten school-like evnironment which in many ways pre-empts the task of the kindergarten (Bureau of the Census, 1970). Since schooling prior to kindergarten is available, some children come to kindergarten socialized and already reading; others come completely naive to the school environment. Such changes must profoundly effect the experience children have in school, how well they can adjust, and what they learn from it, but the effect of these changes on the way children view the school experience is largely known. Similarly, while the impact of a student peer group has proved important in shaping the attitudes towards school of adolescents (Coleman,), it is unclear whether or not very young children are affected by the number of their friends who have had like schooling experiences or the attitudes their friends hold toward school.

Socioeconomic Status

Differences in social class may also affect the experience of early schooling. We know, for example, that lower SES and minority children are more likely to have a different type of organized pre-school experience, if they have one at all, from high SES children. They are also more likely to have day-care, rather than nursery school experiences, in public, rather than private settings.

Social class differences in child rearing patterns may affect the degree to which children can articulate effectively with the school (Bernstein,). Effectiveness of different kinds of instruction is related to differences in socioeconomic status (Brophy and Evertson,); this may be due to class-biased patterns in acquisition of coping skills prepare children for one type of schooling and not for another. A child whose

background prepares him or her for a very structured classroom experience may, for example, have great difficulty in adjusting to the demands for self-direction or lack of adult supervision in a less structured environment.

Sex

Sex differences may affect the way children view school experiences. Girls, for example, with their higher early levels of verbal facility may have different preferences and expectations than do boys.

The Child's View of School

Whether or not children actually see schools in the same way adults do, or as adults want them to do, is also unclear. Except for recollections of life in school written by adults and usually fictionalized, very few studies have attempted to determine the child's viewpoint on the coping skills required for school survival, much less their reconstruction of the philosophy or models underlying the schooling they experience. Studies which purport to present the student view are more often based upon inference drawn from children's behavior in general (Kohl, 1967); or children observed while modeling teacher behavior (White, 1968) or adult interpretations of what children think about school used to support varying ideological positions (Friedenberg, 1971). Another approach has been to enumerate the structural or normative demands of school and the behavioral expectations of teachers and assume that because these are taught, they are learned by children (Dreeben, 1968; Jackson, 1968). Even in the anthropological literature, views of schooling from the students' perspective are rare and usually

limited to studies of older students (Cusick, 1973). How young children view school may have a very important impact upon their future success in school; this study examined the manner in which a group of kindergarten children viewed their kindergarten experience, how those views changed over time, and the extent to which those views were affected by certain background variables and preschool experiences.

It is apparent that classroom management is predicated upon norms concerning order, appropriate behavior, and obedience which express themselves in teaching behavior. Adaptation to those norms facilitates success in school. However, children with different backgrounds and those with different kinds of schooling experiences may vary in their preparation for and conceptualization of schooling and hence in their definition of coping skills they deem appropriate. Without actually asking children, we could not discover what they believed school to be all about, nor determine the degree of congruence between children's beliefs and what previous research (LeCompte, 1978a; LeCompte, 1978b) indicates are behavioral requirements in the classroom.

Focus of the Study

This study was designed to examine several questions:

1. How do young children describe school in terms of their own and the teachers role, the activities they engage in, responsibilities they bear, rules and regulations for appropriate behavior, and preferences for classroom organization and modes of instructional

delivery? More specifically, children were asked questions which elicited:

a. what they thought children did and what they could not do in school
b. what they thought teachers did and what they could not do in school
c. how rules or constraints on child behavior were established

2. How do the descriptions which young children give of specific aspects of the school experience, such as student and teacher roles, appropriate behavior, and conformity to authority, change over time?
3. What background factors, if any, served to differentiate among children with varying definitions of the schooling experience? What background factors, if any, were associated with varying levels of impulse control and orientation to activity?

Subjects

A random sample of 100 kindergarten children from elementary schools in a suburban school district near a major southwestern city were chosen for this study. They were interviewed three times in October, February, and May. Attrition meant that all three interviews were completed for 83 children from the original 100;

these formed the population for the study.

Interview Instrument

A relatively unstructured interview instrument was developed in a pilot study for data collection (see Appendix A). Because of the developmental level of kindergarten children, direct responses to abstract questions could not be elicited; thus photographs and drawings of kindergarten children, teachers, and classrooms were used as stimuli for responses. For example, to determine which type of classroom children preferred, they were first shown two pictures, one of an informal classroom and one of a formal classroom. They then were asked to choose the one they would prefer for their own kindergarten class. Similarly, they were shown children being taught the alphabet in a large group, a small group, and alone with the teacher, and asked to choose which method they preferred. In both instances, they were then asked why they made that choice.

The interviews were tape recorded; the data then was coded from the interviews from the tapes and from the responses recorded on the interview instruments. Each interview took about 30-45 minutes. Demographic data was obtained in an interview with the parents of each child.

Analysis

Part of the study was phenomenological, in that we tried to develop from the children's actual words a sense of the ways they viewed the schooling experience. The procedure used was an inductive content analysis, based upon the children's taped interviews. From the content analysis we derived categories of responses to each

question; a category coding system was then developed so that, where possible, data could be grouped and ordinality imposed upon the responses. Where that was not possible, nominal categories of response were established. The number of categories was kept to a minimum to facilitate statistical analysis. The taped interviews were then coded according to the category system.

Frequency counts of the categories were made, and cross-tabulations of $time_1$ by $time_3$ for particular items created to facilitate comparison of stability of rank ordering and of the types of responses to questions over the several administrations of the instrument.

Given the characteristics of the data, non-parametric statistics were used. The Bowker extension of McNemar's test of symmetry in a square contingency table (Marasculio and McSweeney) was employed to determine if the total distribution of responses in $time_1$ differed from the distribution of responses at $time_3$; it also facilitated post hoc analysis to illustrate where differences, if any, exist.

Background variables, such as family income and mother's and father's education, amount and type of pre-school experience, sex, age, and numbers of pre-school age friends were treated as independent variables. Responses to the interview questions were treated as dependent variables.

A number of constraints had to be considered in the design of this study. First, children were studied in the natural setting of their first school experiences. No control over the assignment of

students to various kinds of classroom was possible. Neither could the type of day care or nursery school for pre-kindergarten experiences be controlled. Second, we were limited to those children whose parents allowed their participation in the study. Third, 33% of students in the school district, where the study was carried out, transfer out of the area each year. No control over these drop-outs was possible. Finally, no control group of children not attending school was possible, since virtually all children the age of five are in school.

Discussion

It appears that, at least for this study, children are more clearly able to tell what teachers are to do in school than what they themselves are to do -- at least in kindergarten. There were many idiosyncratic or unclassifiable responses to these questions; the demographic data also failed to discriminate clearly what activities children thought they would do as students; it was more powerful in discriminating on measures of the teacher's role and impulse control. Part of this may be attributed to the fact that children studied come from a fairly homogeneous community; they mostly live in a middle income, white, well-educated community. Most of the children in the study lived with both parents -- over 70% -- which makes them somewhat atypical of the high percentage of single parent families in the area. In addition, some of our measures such as incomes, did not accurately or adequately categorize the families in the community. In any case, answering questions about their own activities in school seemed hard for the children to do.

Children also found it difficult to answer "why" questions. When asked why they couldn't do certain things in kindergarten, the unclassifiable, or "other", responses constituted the largest category - 44%.

What did clearly emerge was that even in viewing their own role, children saw it as one largely determined by the teacher's wishes, not their own. Teacher-domination or the numbers of responses describing the teacher as arbitrator of activities increased from T_1 to T_3. What is also clear is that by the end of kindergarten, while the teacher is seen as the arbitrator of all activities, and also largely as a worker herself, children do not yet as a whole view school as a place where they are to work. They do not consistently categorize activities which occur in school as work, rather they categorize such activities as play. When cued that the appropriate responses are "work" or "play", they can respond appropriately, but are unable to explain why they chose that answer. Work seems to have something to do with sitting at tables, not on the floor; it also has to do with numbers and letters. But so much of what happens in kindergarten is work "disguised" as play that children don't seem to yet recognize that they are being initiated into a work situation.

Children's View of School

When asked in October what they thought they would do in kindergarten, 36% reported they did not know; interestingly, at T_3 in May, 15% still could not report what they had done in kindergarten. At T_1 the largest percentage (40%) thought they would play and only 7% reported they expected to work. At T_3 37% reported that in kindergarten they were expected to learn to read, 21% that they were to

learn the alphabet and 12% that they were to learn the class rules. It appears that, in this study at least, children do change their perspective of school by the end of the kindergarten year. Many increasingly tend to view school as a place where the emphasis is on the achievement of basic skills with a secondary emphasis on the adoption of school behavioral norms. However, there remains a fairly consistent description of kindergarten activities as predominantly play rather than work. One explanation may be that the children's view of work in comparison to play varies from that held by adults; it may also be that certain groups of children had consistent views of school as play. These differences are discussed later in the paper.

In general, over time children seem to clarify their perceptions of both the teacher and student roles in ways that suggest a greater task orientation, greater conformity to authority, and increased impulse control. The change is clearly towards more disciplined behavior and a greater orientation to cognitive activity.

View of Student Role

Although children begin school with some sense of conformity to authority and impulse control, over time there is a significant move towards increased conformity to authority and impulse control. By T_2 children seem to acknowledge the teacher as the class arbitrator or disciplinarian. When asked when it would be O.K. to go to the bathroom, at T_1 31% gave a don't know response and 41% responded when they had asked the teacher for permission. By T_3, however, only 5% gave a don't know response, but 21% responded when they had asked for teacher permission, and 50% reported when the teacher says to.

Again, when asked what they would do if a child came by and messed up a puzzle they were making, from T_1 to T_3 children increasingly reported they would tell the teacher. Interestingly, at T_1 more children (16%) would simply start over again with the puzzle than at T_3 (5%).

At the beginning of kindergarten, most children categorized kindergarten as work or play; only a few gave "don't know" responses. However, most tended to view kindergarten as requiring mainly play activities (61%) rather than work activities (24%). This view remained fairly stable at T_3 with the play activities increasing slightly to 64% and work activities dropping to 12%.

Much more difficulty was encountered by the children in reporting the constraints on pupil behaviors. At T_1 the majority (75%) could not identify any constraints and only 13% reported they could not do things which teachers forbade. At T_3 39% accepted teacher criteria for restrictions, but 34% still were so unclear of their role that they could not describe those things children could not do in kindergarten. In addition, it was difficult for the children to respond to "why" questions in regard to constraints on their behavior; 48% of the children could not explain why they were unable to do certain things in school, and this decreased only to 33% by T_3.

The children's perception of what they would do if they wanted to talk with a friend varied little over time -- children's perceptions appear to be in accord with school norms as children veiwed them. At T_1 55% of the children would "just go over" to a friend to talk, and at T_3 this increased to 66%. It appears that the mobility inherent in most kindergarten rooms generally supports

such student autonomy. Again, little change occurred from T_1 (14%) to T_2 (1%) in the number of children who would ask the teacher for permission to talk to a peer. In addition, children were unable to explain why they choose to talk to a peer as they did with 61% so responding in T_1 and 43% in T_3 still unable to respond to this question.

The Teacher's Role

In T_1 31% of the children said they didn't know what teachers did in classrooms, but 38% reported they work and 8% that they teach. By T_3 the percentage of children who couldn't report what teachers do dropped to 16% and the percentage who said that teachers teach increased from 8% to 28% while the number stating that teachers work decreased from 38% to 27%. Thus, task differentiation appears in that children begin to describe actual teaching rather than the more generic description, "working".

In the children's responses to a behavioral episode in which a child messes up another child's puzzle, children consistently viewed the teacher as a disciplinarian. Children were asked what the teacher would do in such a situation. In T_1 62% reported the teacher would punish the misbheaving child, and this increased to 69% in T_3. However, there were significant differences over time in their responses to what the teacher would do to let children know that they were talking too loudly. Although 30% in T_1 did not know what the teacher would do, by T_3 only 12% did not know. In T_1 40% reported that the teacher would act by giving verbal

instructions or by physical actions such as turning off the lights, etc., and this increased to 50% by T_3. A minority (17% at T_1 to 12% by T_3) reported that the teacher would punish the loud talkers. Thus, the small percentage that viewed the teacher as a disciplinarian in regard to unsocialized behavior did not change their perception over time.

Children's preferences for classroom organization did not change significantly from T_1 to T_3. At T_1 42% of the children chose to be taught the alphabet on a one-to-one relationship; this increased to 50% by T_3. At T_1 48% of the children preferred total group instruction to 43% at the end of the year. The 7% who chose small group instruction remained constant.

The children's reasons for their preferences suggest that children have varying bases for their choices. Those who chose to be taught on a one-to-one basis did so consistently from T_1 to T_3 because the other kids are too noisy (35%) and because they can learn better (22%). The children who wanted to be taught in a small group also were consistent over time in their reasons -- because they liked those few children. However, there was a significant shift from T_1 to T_2 in the reasons given why total group instruction was chosen. In T_1 60% gave a don't know response, but by T_3 70% reported that they chose total group instruction because they felt that everyone learns better in a larger group.

Analysis Problems for Contingency Tables

Certain problems in analysis of continguency tables derived from the small size of the sample and imbalance in categories of the independent variables. These made reporting statistical significance meaningless; thus simple percentages are reported.

Responses were compared within and across categories. For example, in a table in which mother's education formed the vertical axis, and child's choice of classroom type formed the horizontal axis, children's responses were compared horizontally within the categories of mother's education, and vertically within the individual choice categories. Only where categories of the dependent variables had at least the possibility of five responses per cell were data reported. Where there was major imbalance in the numbers of respondents in categories of independent variables, indices of representation were used to determine whether percentage differences were real differences, or simply an artifact of loading on one demographic category.

In general, the independent variables which were most closely associated with differences in the response of children were sex, educational level of parents, and the amount of time spent in day care. Income probably did not discriminate between groups in this study only because the income variable had only three categories, and the range provided was not great. We had expected to find major differences by income level, if only because there were differences by mother's education, and some by father's education. Mother's education probably has more impact than father's education at the early stages of the educational process since the child probably

models much of its perceptions of teacher and student role on mother's activities and on what mothers tell children about school.

Associations between length of time spent in nursery school and responses to the questions could not be made because so few children had spent more than two years in nursery school that meaningful comparisons couldn't be made. However, length of time spent in day care was associated with response differences, indicating that amount of preschool experience does have an impact on children's view of schooling. Not as much discrimination between types of pre-school experience appeared as had been hoped, which may be attributed to several reasons. The parents may not distinguish meaningfully between day care and nursery school and could have categorized preschool experience incorrectly; there may not be substantial differences in the day care and nursery programs these children were placed in; or it simply may be that being in an institution -- of whatever kind -- run by adults accomplishes the same tasks of initial socialization to authority-oriented, task-oriented, order-producing, scheduled institutions.

Parent's Education and the Teacher's Role

At all three phases, children who said that what teachers did in school was work were those whose mothers had less education. Similarly, the same children said that the teacher interacted with pupils more often than children with mothers whose educational levels were higher. At $time_3$, however, children who described the teacher's role as one of teaching children were those whose mothers had more education. Children who said that there are constraints on teacher behavior --

that is, answer "yes" to the question "Is there anything the teacher cannot do in this room?" tended to be those whose mothers have less education.

With regard to the teacher's role in controlling children's behavior when they want to do specific things -- such as go to the bathroom, talk to friends, or make noise, mother's education was important. Children who said that you could only talk to a friend when the teachers said so, or when the friend wasn't busy; or who described the teacher as punishing a child who interfered with another child's work, or who made noise, were on all three interviews the children whose mothers had less education. These children also referred to the likelihood that teachers would actively correct the child's behavior, or tell parents, more often than did children whose mothers had more education.

By contrast, children who said they could go to the bathroom anytime they wanted to, or when they had to, tended to be the children of mothers with less education. The greater the mother's education, the more likely the children were to indicate that they could only go when the teacher said or if they asked.

Thus, the data suggests that children whose mothers had only a high school education or less are more likely to view the teacher as taking an active and controlling role in discipline than are children whose mothers have more education -- except in the control of bodily functions, in which less well-educated mothers seem to produce children less oriented toward conforming their needs to the wishes of the teacher or authority figure.

Father's Education

The differences with regard to "Father's Education" are not so clear. However, it appears that fathers whose educational levels are higher tend to produce children who are more oriented to viewing the teacher as a pedagogue -- one who teaches, specifically reading, writing, and math -- rather than viewing the teacher as a disciplinarian. Children at T_1 who thought teachers mostly interacted with kids tended to be those with better educated fathers; this persisted at T_2. At T_3, more children with better educated fathers said that teachers teach, and teachers work, than those with less well-educated fathers.

Contrary to the associations described with levels of mother's education, children who think that there are fewer constraints on what teachers can do in the classroom are those with better educated fathers; this persisted through all three phases. There was a slight trend for less well educated fathers to have children who were more likely to say that they couldn't talk to friends except when the teacher said; but children of better educated fathers tended more often to feel that teachers would reprimand or punish children who were noisy. These results simply may be an artifact of the general trend for men to have more education than their wives; further analysis looking at multiple associations between variables will be needed to clarify these findings.

The pattern for bodily needs, however, was similar to that of mother's education. Children whose fathers had lower levels of education tended to be those who said that they could go to the bathroom when they wanted to, or anytime.

While the income variable was not well measured, still, children who described what teachers did as work were more likely to be upper income children. Also, the children with higher incomes were more likely to say that they could only talk to a friend when the teacher said. As income rose, then, the teacher also became more important as an arbitrator of the time to go to the bathroom. This appears to be related to and a reflection of the educational levels of fathers.

Parental Education and the Student Role

The higher the level of mother's education, the less likely the child was to say kindergarten was a place to play. However, children with mothers in the lowest educational category had the largest number of responses as to what kindergarten would be like. Whether or not the father attended college also seemed to be important. In the categories indicating what the children thought they would do in kindergarten, 80% of those saying that school was learning rules or learning to work and 68% of those saying that school was where children learned specific cognitive things had college educated fathers. This relationship held true for all three interviews. Children whose fathers had more than a college education were likely to cite art often as characterizing kindergarten; but they also seldom stated that kindergarten was a place where children play.

Impulse Control

We were also interested in the degree to which differences in children's background affected the degree to which they were able to do something which we roughly called "controlling impulses". To a certain extent this involves delaying gratification in regard to talking with friends and the teacher; it also involves adhering to the school schedule when hungry, tired, or in need of going to the bathroom. It also included the degree to which chilcren solved conflict with other children by taking the law into their own hands -- hitting or otherwise retaliating when molested, or whether they relied on the teacher or simply ignored annoyances inflicted upon them by other children. We asked children a number of hypothetical questions, some of which were harder than others to answer.

Mother's Education

We asked children to tell us how, if they were on one side of the room, they would talk to a child who was located on the opposite side of the room. We did this by means of a picture of children in such positions. Most of the children (more than 57%) at all three times said that they's just "go over there". There was a slight trend for children whose mothers had less than a high school education to indicate more often that they would have to ask teacher first, or to raise their hand. When asked if it was appropriate to talk to the teacher, no significant differences among children were associated with levels of mother's education, but it was clear that all children thought that talking to the

teacher was something one did at the teacher's convenience, not the child's. 41% said that it was O.K. to talk to the teacher when she wasn't busy or talking at T_1; 27% said that it was O.K. if you raised your hand. Children whose mothers had least education were those who said most frequently that one could talk to the teacher anytime -- N=6 out of seven responses in that category. At T_2, forty per cent of the children said you could talk to the teacher when she wasn't talking; 18% indicated that it was O.K. if you raised your ahnd. The same percentages prevailed at T_3.

We also asked children how they would respond if another child -- first a girl, and then a boy -- came along and messed up a puzzle they were working on. Very few children in all mentioned that they would hit the misbehaving child, or mess up that child's puzzle. Few also ignored the offending child, or indicated that they would do nothing about the problem. Boys, however, were more likely to hit than girls.

At T_1, 41% of the children said that they would tell the teacher about such an incident. Children who were more likely to take matters into their own hands were those with the least well educated mothers' they were most likely to say that they'd tell the other child to quit, at both T_2 and T_3. While most children at all times said they would tell the teacher, those who were more likely to tell the teacher were those children with better educated mothers.

Father's Education

At T_1, 42% of the children said that it was O.K. to talk to the teacher when she wasn't busy and 27% said "when children raised their hands." Children whose father's had more than a college education were most likely to say that it was O.K. when the teacher wasn't busy or talking than any other group. This persisted throughout the study. At T_3, children whose fathers had had less than a college education were less likely to say that it was O.K. to talk to the teacher when she permitted; children of college educated fathers were more likely to say that it was O.K. when one raised one's hand.

With regard to conflict with other children, at T_1, upper income children were over-represented among those children who would tell the teacher if another child messed up their puzzle; they also were over-represented among those who would simply start over. At T_2, upper income children were under-represented among those who would tell a child to stop bothering them; otherwise there were no differences. At T_3, upper income children were over-represented among those who would tell the teacher.

Age

When asked how they would talk to a friend, older children were more likely than younger children at all three interviews to simply say that they would "just go over there"; at T_3, younger children were more likely to say that they would have to ask the teacher first to talk to a friend.

At T_1, older children were more likely than younger to say that they could talk to a friend "right then;" younger

were more likely to say that they could only do so when their teacher said. At T_2, there were no differences. At T_3, younger children were more likely to say that they could only talk to friends after school. Younger children said more often that you had to raise your hand to talk to the teacher; older children were more likely to say that you could only talk to the teacher when she was not talking or not busy.

This may mean that older kids can make judgment or an inference as to whether the teacher is busy or not; younger children have to wait to be noticed by the teacher.

Birth Order

Birth order causes no differences on any responses.

Sex

There were some major sex differences in the findings. The data indicated that girls tend to be more oriented to the school as a workplace and to the teacher as an authority figure than were boys.

At T_1, 61% of those who said the teacher is a worker and 68% of those who said she interacts with children were girls. At T_2, there were no sex difference in viewing the teacher's role as worker, but girls were more likely to describe the teacher as someone who "teaches us." (56%-44%) Girls also described the teacher more often as someone who prepares materials for classes. At T_3, the differences increased; girls comprised 69% of the children who said that teachers work, 70% of those who said that teachers teach, and 60% of those who said teachers interact with children.

At T_1, 41% of those who said that school is for play were boys, and twice as many boys as girls said that school is for art. By T_3, 50% of those saying that school is for play were girls, 50% were boys. More boys than girls said that school is for art; twice as many girls as boys said that school is for work, and only girls mentioned specific cognitive skills.

Girls seemed to be much more controlled by the teacher. At T_1 65% of the children who said that they could only talk to a friend when the teacher said it was O.K. were girls; 63% of those who said they could only do so when the friend wasn't busy were girls. However these differences evened out by T_3. Boys were more likely to respond that they could go to the bathroom anytime, when they had to, or want to, than girls, and girls, were more likely to say that they could go only when they asked their teacher.

Most of the children gave idiosyncratic responses to the question "what can't you do in kindergarten?", but twice as many boys as girls said that they couldn't do things that the teachers forbade at T_1. However, at T_2 and T_3 twice as many girls as boys said that they couldn't do things that the teacher forbade.

At T_1, three times as many boys as girls said that they were too little to do the things they said that they couldn't do in kindergarten; three thimes as many girls as boys indicated that the things they couldn't do were impossible because they were role inappropriate - such as "girls don't do that," or "only teacher can do that." However, by T_3, there is a switch;

more girls than boys said that they couldn't do things that would make the teacher mad; and twice as many girls as boys (N=6) said that they couldn't do things because they were too little or too young.

It appears that the teacher's role as arbitrator of classroom life crystallizes earlier for girls than for boys. Girls indicated that punishments of all kinds were likely for infractions of noise rules much more often than boys did. Girls also outnumbered boys in feeling that the teacher would tell their parents if they were noisy.

With regard to interfering with another child's work, girls at T_1 were more likely to say that the teacher would punish a child or talk to a child for messing up another child's puzzle; by T_2 and T_3 boys had taken the lead in describing the teacher's reaction as scolding, or punishing, a misbehaving child, while girls saw her reaction as more likely to be talking to or scolding the misbehaving child. Perhaps the boys have learned by experience.

Pre-School Experience and the Teacher's Role

While type of pre-school experience did not affect the child's view of the student role, going to nursery school seems to affect the child's view of the teacher's role very much.

Effect of Type of Preschool Experience on Description of Teacher Role

Preschool Experience		T_1 Work	T_2 Work	T_2 Teaches Us	T_3 Work	T_3 Teaches Us	T_3 Interacts With
	None	29%	28%	40%	19%	50%	40%
	Day Care	18%	28%	24%	38%	25%	13%
	Nursery	54%	44%	36%	44%	25%	47%
		N=28*	N=18	N=25	N=16	N=20	N=15

*All other responses either were the "No Answer" or "Other" categories, or were too infrequent to report.

Other categories were not listed in the table above because there were insufficient numbers of responses. The type of school attended had no impact upon when a child thought he or she could talk to a friend. The number of children saying that they could go to the bathroom if they asked increased for day care children from 38% to 49%; the number so saying of nursery school children remained about the same. Otherwise, few clear patterns emerged. Nursery school children were, however, at all three phases, more likely to feel that the teacher would punish noisy children, or tell their parents, or verbally reprimand them.

Amount of Time Spent in Day Care

Amount of time spend in day care appears to have an impact on the child's view of the teacher and her authority; the same probably is true for differences in the amount of time spent in nursery school, but it was not possible to analyze that data because there were so few children who had had more than two years of nursery school. For day care, those who described the

teacher's role as work were more often those who had attended day care for more than two years; At T_2, children with less time spent in day care also were more likely to say that teachers work, but less likely to say that teachers teach. At T_3, children with less time spent in day care outnumbered others in both the work and teaches us category.

In all three phases, children in day care for a shorter time were more likely to say that they could only talk to a peer when the teacher said it was O.K. than children who had attended longer. There were no clear patterns regarding going to the bathroom.

At T_1, children who had attended more than two years expected more often to be punished for messing up a child's puzzle; at T_2 they were even with the children who had attended more than two years; and by T_3, the responses had switched, such that those who have attended less than two years were more likely to expect punishment.

At T_1, children who had attended less expected more punishment for making noise, but fewer verbal reprimands than those who have attended more. The expectation of punishment persisted through the three phases, but the expectation of verbal reprimand switched, such that by T_3, children who attended less expected more verbal verbots than the children who attended more.

Pre-School Experience and The Student Role

While there were no real differences among the children according to the type of preschool experience they received--at least insofar as we can report - there were some rather marked differences with regard to the length of time they had spent in the pre-school experience. At T_1, children who had been in day

care for less than two years said that kindergarten was a place to play far more often (78%) than did children who had more than two years of day care (12%). At T_2, while the children who had been in day care longer did not differ markedly in how much they thought school was a place for play, those who had attended day care longer were more likely to say that school was a place to learn specific cognitive matters; (53% as compared to 47% for those who had attended less than two years). The differences with respect to specific cognitive matters were greater with longer nursery school attendance; and in nursery school, those who had attended less than two years more often said that school was a place to learn rules. At T_3, the differences for day care children increased such that 57% of the children who said that school was a place to learn specific subject matters, had attended day care for more than two years. Nursery school children who said that school was a place to be taught rules had generally attended less than two years; also children tended more often to say that school was a place for psychomotor activities.

Impact of Peer Group

Whether or not a child has had a number of friends before attending school affects his/her view of the student role; 57% of the children who say that school is for play tended to have fewer than two pre-school friends. Children who said that school is a place for learning specific cognitive materials were more likely to have more than two friends. These differences persisted through all three phases, but those children who see school as a place to learn rules are likely at Time three to be those with fewer than two friends. Thus peer group influences may have some

effect in the child's view of what he or she will do in school.

Conclusions

Children tended to describe the teacher role more clearly as a worker or teacher than they did their own, which was most often defined as play. However, teachers and students may refer to different aspects of those roles when describing them. Children seem to refer to process, teachers to product, when describing what they did in kindergarten. They tended to describe activities, e.g., "play with blocks"; "put puzzle together". Their teachers would likely say that the same children were learning ABC's by playing with blocks, or acquiring notions of spatial relations by putting puzzles together.

While it would be unreasonable to expect 4-5 year old children to understand or to articulate what was meant by "acquiring notions of spatial relations", it is clear that to children, the important aspect is the process, or play. They do not realize that play has a cognitive purpose. In these classrooms, to use Bernstein's terminology, pedagogy is invisible; the teacher knows, but the children are as yet only dimly aware, what the program is.

The data also suggest that preparedness or orientation to school is multi-dimensional. Children are not simply ready or not ready for school at age 4½; rather they may articulate well with some, but not all, of the dimensions necessary for successful adjustment to the student role. The dimensions isolated in this study seemed to be (1) an orientation to school as a work place in which the work stressed is cognitive learning; and (2) an orien-

tation to mamagement norms which recognize the teacher as an authority or arbitrator of all activities and as the one who imposes order in the classroom.

Differences in the student orientation to these dimensions seem associated with the socioeconomic status of their parents - measured in this study roughly by family income and educational level of the mother and father. The tentative findings are diagrammed in Figure 1, in the form of hypotheses which were generated for the study we are presently analyzing.

Figure 1

Social Background of Child's Family	Orientation to Teacher	Orientation to Student Role	
		play	learner
Higher SES	As pedagogue		x
	As disciplinarian		

		play	learner
Lower SES	As pedagogue		
	As disciplinarian	x	

While there was a fair degree of social homogeneity in the sample within the range provided by this group, children of Higher SES parents were more likely to describe their activities in kingergarten as cognitive ones - "ABS's", "Reading", "learning numbers" - and the teacher's activities as teaching than were Lower SES children; they also were less likely to view the teacher as taking an active and controlling role in

classroom discipline. By contrast, Lower SES children were more frequently described kindergarten activities as play, and described the teacher's activities as work - organizing activities, passing papers, - activities which could be categorized as management. They seemed to be less oriented to the cognitive aspects of schooling, but more oriented to the authority structure in that they were the students who responded most often that they could not do things unless the teacher permitted, and were most likely to cite causing teacher anger as a reason for not engaging in certain activities.

Social background also differentiated children in another area important for classroom management. We called this impulse control, and it referred to the extent to which children were able to defer desires for such things as movement, conversation, and retaliation against children who bothered them. The data suggested that Lower SES children felt more controlled by the teacher, while Higher SES children tended more often to do what they wanted to do when they so desired. However, Higher SES children were more likely to respond passively to annoyances, while Lower SES children were inclined to hit back.

Sex differences in orientation were also apparent: girls were more likely to emit school appropriate responses than boys were on both dimensions outlined earlier; they not only have often described school in terms of cognitive activities, but tended to view the teacher's role as both pedagogue and disciplinarian.

It appears that experience within an institution whether day care or nursery school, provides an orientation to the management system of schooling. While we expected differences associated with type as well as length of pre-school experience, only length of preschooling affected the view children had of both teacher and student behavior; type of schooling did however affect how children viewed teachers. Students who had no pre-school experience, and those who had attended nursery school, had a clearer view of the teacher as both a teacher and manager than did those who had had day care experience. It is possible that those who had no pre-school experience are Higher SES children whose background would lead to an orientation toward school similar to that associated with nursery school experience.

The longer a child spent in pre-school of any kind, the less they tended to describe the student role as play; those who attended less also tended to see the teacher as more punitive and controlling while children with more pre-school experience at T_1 tended to describe the teacher more often as a teacher or worker, the differences were not so clear later in the year.

The data suggest that children who have extensive pre-school experience, including association with other children, may already have "learned the ropes" and are less in need of the intensive socialization to institutional life which characterizes the first few weeks of kindergarten.